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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 ONY-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /029 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:JSBLODGETT:LAR

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TAGS: PFOR, GB, US

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BONGO OF GABON

1. MEETING TOOK PLACE IN CABINET ROOM, WHITE HOUSE, BEGINNING AT 1:45 P.M., MARCH 3, 1977. DURATION SLIGHTLY OVER ONE HOUR. PRESENT ON AMERICAN SIDE WERE PRESIDENT CARTER (FOR ABOUT 50 MINUTES), SECRETARY VANCE, ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFEE, THOMAS THORNTON (NSC STAFF) AND ALEC TOUMAYAN, INTERPRETER. ON GABONESE SIDE, PRESIDENT OMAR BONGO, FOREIGN MINISTER MARTIN BONGO, AND AMBASSADOR RENE KOMBILA.

2. PRESIDENT BONGO BEGAN EXPRESSING HIS PLEASURE AT BEING THE FIRST AFRICAN HEAD OF STATE TO MEET PRESIDENT CARTER.

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IN VIEW OF HIS IMMINENT ACCESSION TO CHAIRMANSHIP OF ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY, HE WISHED TO SPEAK LESS OF BILATERAL MATTERS AND MORE OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS. FIRST BRINGING UP THE MIDDLE EAST, HE NOTED THAT TOPIC WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT IN CAIRO MARCH 6-10. HE BELIEVED SUB-SAHARAN AFRICANS COULD PERSUADE ARABS TO ACKNOWLEDGE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST, AND THAT OAU AND U.S.

SHOULD WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS THIS END IN COMING MONTHS.

3. ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, PRESIDENT BONGO URGED U.S. TO CONTINUE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT. RHODESIA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA SHOULD BE PERSUADED TO TAKE ACTIONS LEADING TO DIALOGUE, RATHER THAN VIOLENCE, BETWEEN BLACKS AND WHITES. BONGO POINTED OUT THAT SITUATION COMPLICATED NOT ONLY BY WHITE INTRANSIGENCE BUT ALSO BY COMPETING FACTIONS WITHIN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND BY THEIR ETHNIC TIES TO VARIOUS NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. HE BELIEVED THAT OUTSIDE POWERS MUST ACT IF ANOTHER ANGOLA WAS TO BE AVOIDED.

4. NOTING FIRST THAT USG WAS CONSTRAINED TO COMMUNICATE WITH IAN SMITH VIA PRIME MINISTER VORSTER OR THROUGH THE BRITISH, PRESIDENT CARTER STATED USG POSITION THAT SMITH AND FRONT LINE LEADERS SHOULD GO TO GENEVA WITHOUT DELAY TO EFFECT TRANSFER OF POWER TO BLACK MAJORITY. USG WAS CONSULTING CLOSELY WITH BRITISH IN THEIR EFFORTS. AT HOME, NEW ADMINISTRATION ACTIVELY SEEKING REPEAL OF BYRD AMENDMENT. USG READY TO TAKE WHATEVER PEACEFUL ACTIONS IT COULD TO BRING ABOUT MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA, AND RAPID MOVEMENT TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND MAJORITY RULE IN SOUTH AFRICA. PRESIDENT BONGO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THIS RESPONSE, STRESSING AGAIN NEED TO AVOID ANOTHER ANGOLA IN RHODESIA BY ACHIEVING PEACEFUL SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL PARTIES.

5. OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY BONGO INCLUDED PRODUCER-
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CONSUMER DIALOGUE (HE SALUTED USG INITIATIVES) AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (HE HOPED U.S. WOULD COOPERATE WITH FRANCE IN CONTRIBUTING TO FUND). REGARDING BILATERAL RELATIONS, PRESIDENT BONGO SAID THEY WERE EXCELLENT, IN GOOD PART BECAUSE OF CLOSE RAPPORT WITH U.S. AMBASSADOR STEIGMAN AND PRIVATE U.S. BUSINESSMAN MAURICE TEMPLESMAN. GABON WAS NOT A FRENCH PRESERVE, AND NEEDED CLOSE TIES WITH U.S. THERE WERE 49 U.S. COMPANIES IN GABON AND BONGO WANTED MORE. GABON WAS WORKING WITH U.S. COMPANIES TO SET UP INDEPENDENT NATIONAL AIRLINE, AND HAD APPLIED TO EXIM BANK FOR LOAN IN SUPPORT OF MAJOR AIRCRAFT PURCHASE. HE HOPED PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD USE HIS INFLUENCE TO SUPPORT LOAN REQUEST.

6. PRESIDENT CARTER REPLIED THAT USG WAS INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING EVEN CLOSER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH IN GABON. REGARDING EXIM BANK, THERE WERE CONGRESSIONAL RESTRAINTS WHICH FORCED BANK TO FOLLOW CONSERVATIVE LENDING POLICIES; BUT IF LOAN WAS SOUND, HE WAS SURE BANK WOULD

BE RECEPTIVE. PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE WOULD

BE SURE TO PASS ON TO BANK THE CONCERNS NOTED BY
PRESIDENT BONGO.

7. AT THAT POINT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD TO LEAVE, BUT EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR HAVING PRESIDENT BONGO'S INSIGHTS INTO AFRICAN QUESTIONS. MEETING HAD BEGUN A FRIENDSHIP WHICH WOULD CERTAINLY GROW.

8. CONTINUING MEETING, SECRETARY VANCE ASKED BONGO WHETHER HE DETECTED ANY FLEXIBILITY IN POSITION OF PLO TOWARDS QUESTION OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST. BONGO REPLIED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY MET WITH TWO PLO REPRESENTATIVES WHO TOLD HIM THAT PLO WOULD NOW AGREE TO ACCEPT EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, AND WOULD ACCEPT SMALL STATE ON WEST BANK IN FEDERATION WITH JORDAN. ATTRIBUTING THIS VIEW
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TO ARAFAT, THE TWO REPS HAD STATED, HOWEVER, THAT PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE IN GENEVA BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN PLO. THE SECRETARY THANKED BONGO FOR THIS INFORMATION, WHICH WOULD BE USEFUL AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSIONS (THE SOURCE WOULD OF COURSE BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL). REGARDING AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND, SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS IT FURTHER WITH PRESIDENT.

9. PRESIDENT CARTER RETURNED TO SAY GOODBYE. IN PARTING, PRESIDENT BONGO INVITED THE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY VANCE AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFLE TO VISIT GABON. THE SECRETARY THANKED HIM FOR THE INVITATION AND SAID HE MAY BE ABLE TO COME AFTER HE HAD HAD MORE TIME TO WORK INTO NEW JOB.
CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUMMIT MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE059804
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JSBLODGETT:LAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770092-0407
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770348/aaaabpxi.tel
Line Count: 154
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f1067db6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3073916
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUMMARY OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BONGO OF GABON
TAGS: PFOR, GB, US, (CARTER, JIMMY), (BONGO, EL HADJI OMAR)
To: LIBREVILLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f1067db6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009